

THE GREEN CALDRON

A Magazine of Freshman Writing



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Casablanca to Tripoli

RICHARD HAAG

Rhetoric I, Theme 11, 1945-1946

THE NAMES WERE READ OFF AT THE NOON FORMATION. Eighteen of us were "alerted" to be flown to Tripoli. The orders had come sooner than we had expected. Jack Metzger and I put our heads together to find a way to have one last look at Casablanca. Between us, we gave birth to two ideas, which we "cried" to the proper authorities.

Jack wanted to buy some film, and I had to pick up a watch that I had left to be repaired. These ruses were accepted on the condition that first we were to pack our stuff and drop it at headquarters. We packed pronto. The "sarge" then surprised us by giving us our passes and the keys to the company jeep. After stopping in our area and collecting a few empty wine bottles, we sped from Camp Don B. Passage in a cloud of dust. We brought the bottles back filled with sparkling Burgundy and allotted a canteenful to each of our buddies.

That night, the eighteen of us got little sleep. We had a royal bull-session which ended, as bull-sessions often do, with a heated discussion about religion. Those who had "hit the sack" were rudely aroused by the merciless C.Q.'s whistle. In considerable confusion, we loaded into two six-by-sixes and shivered all the way to the airport. After the guards at the airport entrance waved us on, we pulled onto the runway and stopped under the wing of a C-54. Down the strip we could dimly see the forms of B-25's, laid out like men on a chessboard — pawns to be played by the Tenth Air Force in the battle of Burma.

After a stretch, a smoke, and a roll call, we climbed into the belly of the plane. Our baggage was loaded. Before we were seated in the bucket-seats, we noticed that we were sharing the ride with two factory-fresh B-29 engines.

Most of us were going up for the first time. I shall never forget the thrill of it. After the crew passed up the aisle between us, things began to happen up front. After a while came the high-pitched crescendo of a magneto; it ended with the number three engine bursting into life. One after another the engines roared into action. Blue flames streaked from the exhaust. After the warmup period, we taxied to the end of the strip. The brakes were tested and applied. We could hear the electric engines whir as the flaps and the rudder were checked. Safety belts were fastened, and Jack looked at me, his lips curved in a thoughtful smile. Each engine was given full throttle in turn, and the ship vibrated in anticipation of becoming airborne. All the engines seemed to respond perfectly to the touch of the pilot.

Then all four were "revved-up" in a deafening roar. Just as it seemed the plane would tear itself apart, there was a lurch, and we thundered down the runway, past the B-25's. Before I could realize it, we were airborne. The ground dropped away.

Some of the boys must have been frightened because I heard some sighs of relief as we removed our safety-belts. The C-54 climbed a long arc over the city and its harbor. We had a last look at the French battleship, the once-mighty *Jean Bart*, which now lay against the breakwater — rusting in the dark sea. We dipped a wing and banked toward the sun, which was just coming over the brink of the world. I shall always remember how Casablanca looked from the air that morning. I forgot about the houses of vice, the crowded cabarets, and the reeking *medina*, or native section. The city looked immaculate and organized, and no sin seemed possible there.

The whitewashed villas cast long shadows, and the olive groves became uniform. The open country came, and it passed slowly beneath us; the land became less fertile; the rolling hills grew sharper.

As the sunlight began to find its way into the valleys, they appeared to lose their depth. Soon we were flying through wispy strings of mist, the beginnings of clouds. When I was a child, I recalled, I thought that clouds were composed of smoke and that they moved around the earth in a definite cycle. The clouds choked in around us and soon swallowed us up. The wings began icing up, and the air became turbulent. The plane no longer seemed to be the complete master over its element. I was strangely fascinated by the buckling and bending of the wings as they absorbed the shocks of the storm.

The plane was nosed over slightly, and soon we broke through into the world of sunlight. Just ahead a solitary mountain lofted its cap of pure snow. This majestic peak, in the Atlas range, was one of the few landmarks on the route to Tripoli. We seemed to pass so closely that I watched to see if the snow was disturbed by the prop-wash.

Jack Metzger motioned to me; together we went up to the cockpit, where we enjoyed a smoke.

While we smoked, the terrain below us changed a great deal. The land lay full in the sun, and barren, with outcroppings of stone and occasional dunes. Small wonder, I thought, that the Berbers and the Islamic peoples were of a fierce and wild nature — small wonder, that the Islamites had chosen for their flag a field of green.

Feeling tired, I stretched out in the aisle and rolled up in a blanket.

I found my canteen and took a long, slow "pull." I sloshed my tongue around in this grape juice and forced its richness between my teeth before swallowing it. A warmth radiated through me. I remember thinking about the rise and fall of the Carthaginians, and then about the Battle of Tours. I contemplated that I might now be a Mohammedan had not Martel's forces

been the stronger. I remembered that the Arabs had devised the term for zero, which is the basis of our numerical system. This was the solution to the problem which had proved to be too much for the Greeks or Romans. I thought of caravans falling prey to bearded horsemen, and of blue-eyed Moors, and veiled women, and of dusky dancing girls. . . . The steady hum of the plane lulled me to sleep.

They Were There

STANLEY BURT

Rhetoric II, Theme 6, 1945-1946

WALKS-ON-RIVER, TWO-FINGERS, DICK WASHAKIE, and others of the vanishing tribe of full-blooded Indian: never read our history books, but if they did, they would disagree with the way we have written up many episodes in our western expansion. They would certainly disagree with the conventional story of Custer's last stand, and particularly with the legend of his cunning and bravery. He certainly did not exhibit cunning when he led his men into a trap set by the Indians, or bravery in the manner of his death. These men should know what really happened at the Battle of the Little Big Horn, for they were there.

It is common knowledge that, after a forced march, Custer reached the Little Big Horn River with his Seventh Cavalry, and after dividing his forces, attacked the enemy village. We also know that he met with an overwhelming number of Indians, and was forced back to a small hill where his command was completely wiped out.

The Indians would agree with this, but many of the details as we know them do not agree with those Dick Washakie, son of the famous Shoshone chief, told my father, for a time the Indian Agent for the Shoshone and Arapahoe tribes in Wyoming.

"Ask him to go on," Dad said to the interpreter. After the translation, the venerable Indian paused to gather up his thoughts, and then slowly began to speak from the past.

"I was a scout for General Terry when Long Hair went out to find Sitting Bull's camp. Long Hair wanted to travel fast, so he left all his artillery with Terry. He didn't even take his saber. Long Hair was always in a hurry. Always showing off."

"What was Custer to do when he found the camp?"

"The plan was for Long Hair to watch the village, count the warriors, and wait for Terry to arrive with the artillery and reinforcements; then they would attack the village together."

Dad interrupted to ask if Custer had met any Indians on the way.

"I do not think so. He sent no messages back, and we never saw him again. Terry began following soon after, but we could not go so fast because of the artillery. When we neared the Little Big Horn, something was wrong — but we did not know what."

Washakie paused to remember, then continued slowly. "We found some soldiers who told us they had been attacked by a large army of Sioux, Crows, and Arapahoes. They didn't know where Long Hair was, so we began looking for him. We could see where a large camp had been at the edge of the river, but there were no Indians around. They had gone north."

"What did the battlefield look like when you found it?" Dad wanted to know.

"When we found Long Hair, there were many bodies about him, and many dead horses. All the bodies were stripped and scalped and cut up. All except Long Hair. They didn't touch him."

My father asked what had happened at the battle. Washakie explained that he knew only what Two-Fingers, who had participated in the actual battle, later told him.

"Sitting Bull was a wise medicine man. When he learned from his scouts that Long Hair was coming, he set a trap for him by hiding his warriors in the brush along the river, leaving only the old men and women and a few braves in the camp. When Long Hair saw how weak the village was, he started across the river to attack. When he was in the river, the braves charged, and killed many soldiers before they could retreat to a small hill."

"Where was Sitting Bull during the Battle?" Dad asked. He was now completely absorbed in the story.

"Sitting Bull was not a warrior. He was a medicine man and was not in the battle. Sitting Bull told his braves to kill all the soldiers except Long Hair. He wanted him to use in bargaining with the government."

"Then why was Custer killed?" Dad asked.

"When all the soldiers were dead, the warriors rushed in to grab Long Hair; but before they could reach him, he raised his pistol to his head and killed himself."

The Indian paused to emphasize his last sentence, but my Dad couldn't wait.

"Why did they mutilate the bodies?"

"The braves did not do that. After the battle the squaws stripped the bodies and scalped them. The men did not do that. They did not touch Long Hair because Indians are afraid of a man who kills himself. He has evil spirits."

With that he was through. Dick had told his story of the Custer massacre as he knew it. Though Dick's version isn't in our history book, the old Indian was sincere, and his memory sharp. I am inclined to believe him.

Kriegie Craftsmen

ROBERT A. CHITTENDEN

Rhetoric II, Theme 6, 1945-1946

MONOTONY AND BOREDOM DOMINATED THE LIVES of prisoners of war — kriegies (contraction of the German word *kriegsgefangenen*) — at the German Luftwaffe camp, Stalag Luft III, Sagan, Germany. The kriegies had all too few of the material things of life and much too much time on their hands. In every room of every barracks of each of the four compounds, a former pilot, bombardier, or navigator was appointed the official tinsmith, and someone else was elected to the responsible post of cook. Since time was so plentiful, they spent many hours perfecting their respective techniques. Through necessity the two worked in close cooperation. The Goons — the kriegie equivalent of Germans — issued uncooked vegetables but no cooking vessels. The cooks had nothing to work with, other than large porcelain pots, and there weren't even enough of these to go around. Since the only available metal was the tin cans in which Red Cross food was packaged, the tinsmiths set to work fashioning pans and utensils from salvaged food tins.

The various tinsmiths normally used the same method for preparing the cans for conversion into useful articles. The tops and bottoms were removed with one of the precious Goon-issue table knives. The seam along the edge of the can was opened up, and the tin was hammered into a flat sheet. After the rough edges were trimmed, the sheet was cut to the desired size. When several tin sheets had been prepared, the craftsman joined them together to form one large piece of material. He did this through a series of overlapping joints which were secured by placing the flat side of a knife blade on the seam and pounding it out with an improvised wooden mallet. The large tin sheet was measured and cut according to the shape and size of the vessel desired by the cook. After the material was folded at the corners and the seams tightened once more, the baking pan was given a watertight test, while fourteen hungry roommates assured their resourceful buddy that he had done a fine job. Usually a few droplets of water revealed the presence of one or two slight leaks, but they were sealed by food particles after the pan had been used several times. Naturally the first few utensils made by the self-made tinsmiths were crude. After a little more experience, however, the craftsman usually produced pans which were truly pieces of skilled workmanship. The complete lack of adequate cutting tools caused the finished product to seem even more ingenious.

One enterprising kriegie perfected a soldered seam. The idea itself wasn't revolutionary, but the method devised to do the job was. Two pieces of

equipment necessary for the soldering process were fashioned from tin. The first was a small burner with a wick. Rancid butter — obtained from the scarce Red Cross food parcels — was used as fuel. It was pre-heated to cause it to flow through the wick, where it burned with a cool yellow flame. A blowpipe — the master stroke — resembled a bean blower with a cone-shaped tip attached. Solder was obtained in tiny amounts from the lids of corned-beef cans. Thirty or forty lids were placed in a stove. The melted solder, collected and poured into a crack in the floor, formed a long, thin bar. The flame of the burner was placed between the article to be soldered and the tip of the blowpipe. When the tinsmith blew through the tube, the oxygen from his breath created a hot, blue, pointed flame. This flame was directed on the metal surface while solder was applied. That particular technique, generally used for welding operations, proved to be a very effective way to solder.

After the immediate need for pots and pans had been taken care of, the smith usually started experimenting with his own pet ideas for the production of a few luxuries. Cracker grinders were made from the inevitable tin can and a few scraps of wood. A large can, its surfaces perforated from the inside with a nail, served as a grinding surface. It was mounted on an axle and revolved by a crank. It proved to be a great improvement over the improvised conventional grater, which usually was responsible for torn fingernails and bloody finger tips.

Another luxury, the kriegie washing machine, was usually referred to as the pogo stick. It consisted of two cans, of different sizes, one inside the other, mounted on the end of a stick. A novel valve arrangement permitted air to be forced from the cans as the stick was pushed down into a bucket of clothes. On the up stroke the resulting vacuum caused the heavy, wet clothes to cling to the cans momentarily as they were lifted away from the bottom of the bucket. When the load became too much for the vacuum to hold, they were released and dropped back to the bottom of the pail. The agitation caused by rapid strokes of the pogo stick removed dirt more easily and more effectively than the conventional "backbreaker" method.

Fuel was very scarce at Sagan; consequently, any method for utilizing more of the heat was accepted with great joy. A small stove with a supercharged draft was constructed. As usual, it was made from tin cans. A wooden wheel revolved and drove a smaller wooden wheel at a ratio of about one turn to twenty. On the same axle with the small wooden wheel was an impeller, a fan-shaped arrangement with about eight or ten blades. The impeller was encased in a housing, complete with a tunnel which directed the flow of the forced draft through the grate of the stove. The arrangement resulted in quicker heat at higher temperatures and also increased the supply of available fuel. Green sticks, old shoes, pine needles, or practically anything else of questionable value could be effectively burned.

Other items such as pancake turners, egg beaters (not that there were any fresh eggs), and the like were turned out in wholesale lots. At the end of a month the cooks were well equipped with labor-saving devices.

Many of the craftsmen turned their newly developed talents into a hobby. They produced, for example, picture frames, cigarette cases, and pipe racks. One kriegie built a steam-driven boat two and a half feet long. It contained a boiler, two steam-driven turbines, two propelling screws, and all of the necessary handmade tubing and fittings. On her maiden voyage in a fire pool she crossed the thirty feet under her own power, and against the wind at that.

The kriegies took such pride in their projects that a real spirit of competition developed. Each man struggled to improve his designs and workmanship. Eventually a contest was scheduled, and prizes were awarded for the most useful, the best constructed, and the most novel of the entries. First prize was a couple of packages of American cigarettes, something really worth the effort. Non-smokers participated for the pleasure derived from tinkering and for the honor of being recognized as the compound's best craftsman.

The room cook was, of course, as important as the tinsmith and frequently as ingenious. Food was scarce. Although the Red Cross parcels helped immeasurably, they were never adequate. As a result, the cooks endeavored to make what was available as tasty as possible.

Most of the food was prepared in the usual manner. Carrots and kohlrabi were boiled, potatoes were mashed, and the heavy German bread was toasted; however, the same dishes time after time became monotonous. A search was on for new ways to prepare the same old issue. The Goon ration of uncooked barley was soon transformed into a tasty dish. The grain was boiled for several hours until it had absorbed a large amount of water and increased its bulk considerably. It was then poured into a pan and allowed to set overnight. After twelve or fourteen hours it had the consistency of corn meal mush. The solidified mass was sliced and fried. A small amount of coarse Goon sugar in water was boiled into a thin syrup. The hot fried barley covered with syrup made a first-rate breakfast for palates which longed to be tickled with something different.

By cutting a few meals to the minimum, we could accumulate a small food surplus. On a special holiday such as Thanksgiving or Christmas, the surplus was "bashed" — the kriegie equivalent of "shooting the works" — in order that everyone might have food enough to feel somewhat satisfied at the end of the meal.

The most remarkable culinary achievement was the preparation of macaroni and cheese. Tough, large Canadian crackers, from Canadian Red Cross food parcels, were soaked overnight in a thin mixture of powdered

milk. When the crackers were sufficiently softened, salt and American cheese — from American Red Cross parcels — were added. The “macaroni” was baked until enough water had been evaporated to give the proper consistency. This variation was well received.

American ingenuity in World War II has been praised often and loud. This ingenuity, directed toward unpublicized ends, paid big dividends to the first force which invaded Germany in the Second World War. Uncle Sam’s ten thousand nephews at Stalag Luft III maintained high morale by spending their time in attempts to better their existence. Reading and sports contributed a great deal to the task. Pounding tin cans into useful articles and preparing more appetizing meals, however, were the most practical and necessary of the *kriegies*’ varied activities.

Geruma Shima

Our small boat bumped as it hit the sun drenched, shell cluttered beach on that scorching, cloudless day in August. The ramp dropped, and there, about one hundred yards inland, we saw the small primitive town of Geruma. Nestled in the heavy umbrella-shaped *guno* trees, like Easter eggs spread out in a green tissue paper nest, were the rounded, sloping, red tile roofs of the houses.

As we approached, the cool damp air of the village eased the burning in our throats and nostrils, and we could hear the bleating of sheep from within the walls of the courtyards. The cool shade of the *guno* trees was as refreshing as a dip in the sea on a hot summer day. The winding narrow ox cart streets were formed by eight-foot-high stone walls that surrounded and secluded the homes and courtyards of the local dwellers. Within these walls, the small one-story mud and clay houses, a goat pen attached to the far end, were now as they had been for centuries, unchanged by the rumbling turmoil and progress of the outside world. The fish nets hanging neatly on small wooden pegs on the inside of the walls were the same kind as were used by the fathers, grandfathers, yes, and even the great grandfathers of the present generation. In the shaded courtyards, little children played now as they did before the discovery of the new world. Progress, the improved way to an unimproved end, was unknown to these people in their little shaded oasis. — CLIFFORD LOOMIS

The Meaning of Life

To me, while in combat, life connoted sorrow, grief, hate, bitterness, disillusionment and discouragement. It meant that my senses, a part of life itself, could torment me, that I could freeze in bitterly cold fields and forests. It permitted me to be wet and muddy and dirty and *feel* wet and muddy and dirty. It allowed me to be stung by fear and tortured by the death and smell of death around me. It empowered me to experience the anguish of the dire monotony of continually moving and attacking as in capturing a clearing leading to a forest, capturing a forest leading to a cluster of farmhouses, capturing the cluster of farmhouses guarding a ridge, capturing a ridge guarding a clearing.

— ARTHUR R. GOTTSCHALK

December, 1946

Maybelle

EARLE HANKS

Rhetoric I, Theme C, 1946-1947

WHEN I WAS A SMALL BOY, MY SISTER AND I USED to go every summer to a small farm my parents owned. There we lived with the tenants until we were called back to town by school. Our main interest was not, as you might think, in chasing chickens, riding horses, and doing all the other things city children on farms are expected to do. Much to the exasperation of Minnie, our tenant's wife, we spent most of our time listening on the party line. When we came back in the fall even more pale than when we went away, our parents, expecting us tanned and healthy, never failed to be disappointed. Instead of running and playing in the sun, we spent our every free moment at the telephone.

About a quarter of a mile down the road from our farm lived a lovable character who labored under the atrocious name of Maybelle. She was a very plump old maid with a huge bosom which shelved several dime-store brooches and two medals that proclaimed to all the world she was White County's Champion Angel-food Cake Baker. She wore these signs of victory and leadership everywhere, and it was a common rumor that she hung them around her neck on a string when she bathed. I am sure that she would rather have appeared in public without her petticoat than be seen without them.

She had a small income — no one knew just where it came from — upon which she fared very well. She seemed never to work except to feed her pets and herself. Her time, as was ours, was spent listening to the conversations of her neighbors on the telephone. She was a most accurate authority on the comings and goings of the people in our community. If any business a person did involved using the 'phone, it was understood that Maybelle, and subsequently the whole community, would know about it.

I remember once when my sister had a fish bone caught in her throat and we were frantically calling for the doctor, ever-present Maybelle calmly cut in to announce, "Well, let's see. Early this mornin' he went out to see about Old Lady Jenkins's gall bladder, and from there he went to see about Nat Taylor's oldest girl and her tonsil operation she had done last Tuesday. I reckon about now he ought to be out at Effie Potter's looking at her fifth-born. He's supposed to go see Sal Burnside, but she ain't no more sick than I am, so if I's you I'd jest call Potter's and tell Doc Stanley to come right over." Sure enough, when we called the Potter farm, we found the doctor there and willing to come to our house and extract the bone that was causing so much trouble.

No matter how much we listened, we could never know as much news as our friend, Maybelle; moreover, because of the few small chores we were required to do, we spent some time away from the telephone. That was not so with Maybelle. She had a bell installed outside her house so that she could catch any call that came while she was outdoors.

Naturally, we often speculated on how she made her living. Our only clue was that every Wednesday afternoon at four o'clock a black sedan would stop at her house for about ten minutes. Neighbor women, anxious to solve the mystery, would drop in unexpectedly on Wednesdays and stay until four and after. However, there must have been some prearranged signal between Maybelle and her unknown visitor, for when she had company, the black sedan never stopped.

This mystery was not solved until the fourth summer I had visited there. Then it was suddenly revealed to the whole community why it was that Maybelle listened to the telephone conversations so religiously. Someone, somehow, discovered that Maybelle was selling the news she heard on the party line to the county paper. She was in disgrace! The neighbor women refused to speak to her. Also, prejudiced judges, whose wives were on the party line, gave the prize at the county fair to some other woman's cake. Maybelle was never quite the same again.

Our Basement

ALICE JORDAN

D.G.S. 1b, Theme 3, 1945-1946

OUR BASEMENT, IN THE FOURTEEN YEARS COVERED by my memory, has led a rich and colorful life. It has no outstanding features and is much like other cellars; only what other basements do, our basement does a little more enthusiastically. When it rains, other basements grow damp and possibly leak a little, but ours becomes a raging whirlpool, and my father is forced to don his hip boots for an excursion into the unknown to unplug the stopped-up drain.

The first time such a phenomenon occurred, my mother and I were home alone and unprotected while a violent electrical storm crashed and raged outside. Our terror reached untold heights when, suddenly, from the depths emerged a sound which seemed to be produced by some monstrous creature stumbling around in our basement. We dashed for the cellar door and bolted it. Then summoning all the composure and courage at our command, we peeked down the clothes chute, only to see a large collection of milk bottles

crashing together as they were whirled about in the dark waters beneath us. Since then we have learned to meet such occasions calmly and to unplug the drain as soon as possible.

And then there was the episode of the mud puppy. A mud puppy is a small amphibian, green in color and covered with black spots. Ours was between four and five inches long. Mud puppies are partial to dampness; so, naturally, our basement was equipped with one. His only activity was to crawl out of his hole punctually at eight o'clock every night and to crawl in again an hour later. One of our favorite pastimes in the evening was to watch the mud puppy. We tried to get down to the basement either at eight or at nine, for between times he just sat, and we didn't consider it fun to watch a sitting mud puppy. It was much more exciting to see the little green slimy thing half squirm and half crawl across the floor. But this form of entertainment passed abruptly from our lives, for one sad day my mother read that a mud puppy's bite was poisonous. With the welfare of her family at stake, she decided it was best to plug up the mud puppy's hole and terminate his nightly excursions.

In the post-mud puppy era came Mr. Stenlein, who managed to brave the unfavorable climate and lived in our basement periodically over a span of years. He was the vagabond type and would depart suddenly for Texas, California, or just any place as soon as the rainy season approached. Not that I blame him, for existence in our basement during the rainy season would be comparable to residing permanently in a shallow swimming pool. Often when Mr. Stenlein departed for destinations unknown, he would forget to tell us that he was leaving. However, we could count on his return after an absence of about three months, at which time he would quietly move in again, and my father would say in resigned tones, "Well, he's back again." My mother would pretend not to hear.

Perhaps I should explain that my mother was the "discoveress" of Mr. Stenlein, and that she felt it her duty to protect him whenever my father spoke unkindly of his drifting tendencies. Antique furniture, of which my father is not fond and which my mother collects with enthusiasm, was the main reason for her defending Mr. Stenlein.

A section of our basement had been given over to the housing of all sorts of derelict tables, chests, chairs, and beds — all in need of refinishing. Somewhere back in Mr. Stenlein's mysterious past had been a period of employment as refinisher in a large furniture factory. But age had worked upon his vision, making this kind of labor impossible for him. My mother's furniture, however, numerous as my father said it was, wasn't too much for his eyes.

He also was the sole possessor of a secret formula for a miraculous furniture polish and used our basement as his headquarters for brewing and

bottling great quantities of the stuff. Then he sold it from door to door to finance his long excursions. My father lived in constant terror of Mr. Stenlein's putting the wrong constituents into his polish and blowing us all up. He always managed to go for a walk whenever the fumes of brewing furniture polish were in the air.

Mr. Stenlein, like the mud puppy, wasn't destined to become a permanent fixture in our basement, for it has been about five years now since he last set out on one of his trips; and my father has finally stopped sniffing the air for furniture polish fumes upon entering the house.

Since Mr. Stenlein, the basement has led a rather uneventful life, the only new additions being more antiques. However, the other day my mother hesitantly informed my father that she had found a yard man, who would like to live in our cellar. His name is Grover Cleveland Bishop, and my mother listed as one of his good points the fact that he knows nothing about furniture polish. Mr. Bishop is moving in next week.

The Camera Eye

A Review of 1919 by John Dos Passos

CHARLES R. BROWN

Rhetoric II, Book Review 1, Summer 1946

DOS PASSOS HAS SET DOWN A KALEIDOSCOPIC REVIEW of the causes and effects of World War I and the peace that followed, frankly tossing his indictment at the feet of capitalism and politics. He specifically names the Morgan interests, Royal Dutch Shell, and Standard Oil. In one thumbnail sketch of J. P. Morgan he writes, "War and panics on the stock exchange, bankruptcies [are] good growing weather for the House of Morgan." The author also indicates that whatever "Mr. Morgan suggests" became White House policy. He portrays Woodrow Wilson's rise as "the most powerful man in the world," and traces the bewilderment of Europe and America as "Meester Wilson" allows himself to be "trimmed in a three card game called the Council of Four . . . [with] oil as trumps."

The pillar-to-post lives of his characters serve only to hold the montage together. Throughout the novel he reveals the ordinary citizen caught in a web of circumstances spun by ambitious profiteers and politicians. "If you objected," he says, "to making the world safe for cost-plus democracy, you went to jail." Describing Wilson's homecoming, he writes, "The men

in overalls, the workingstiffs let him pass in silence after all the other blocks of . . . patriotic cheers."

By means of interpolative devices entitled "The Camera Eye" and "Newsreel" the author serves up a staccato, sans-punctuation account of the war years, employing snatches of popular songs, newspaper headlines, and speeches. His camera eye probes acutely into Paris and New York, Nice and Rome. Constant irony adds humor to an otherwise sober report, as when he proclaims, "11,000 registered harlots said the Red Cross Publicity Man infest the streets of Marseilles."

With this disconnected array of facts Dos Passos manages to leave the impression that war is a grand, drunken, pointless brawl. His novel is full of slackers, conscientious objectors, Rabelaisian soldiers, and frustrated youths. It may be true that he has chosen atypical characters and situations, but he illustrates convincingly the futility and the "*c'est la guerre*" attitude among the multitude. As one character declares, "Fellers, this war's the biggest . . . graft of the century, and me for it and the red cross nurses."

There are few faults in the author's style, but effective as "Camera Eye" and "Newsreel" are, they seem almost too incoherent for pleasant reading. Consequently a reader is tempted to skip them and thus lose a mass of background color, contrast, and humor. In addition, Dos Passos has communist tendencies which will put most readers on the defensive, and the novel at times approaches burlesque in its cynical treatment of mankind's motives and conduct.

However, his last chapter alone makes the book worth reading. As anti-war propaganda, "The Unknown Soldier" is particularly appealing. The author quotes President Harding, who spoke of Joe Doe as ". . . a typical soldier of democracy [who] fought and died believing in the . . . justice of his country's cause." Dos Passos' idea of the Unknown Soldier is —

They picked out the pine box that held all that was left of eenie, menie, minie, moe . . . Make sure he ain't a dinge, boys, a guinea, a kike . . .

How can you tell a guy's one hundred percent when all you've got's a sack full of bones and some buttons stamped with the screaming eagle?

Yes, Dos Passos has his faults, but he rarely fails to be convincing. One is strongly tempted to substitute 1946 for 1919.

Boredom in Myitkyina

Boredom? Same, identical, monotonous routine, day after day after day. Occasional Big Thrill: GI outdoor movies three times a week. Poker. Pinochle. Bridge. Craps. The dusky Burmese gals look whiter every day. No. We're going home, sometime. We'll be doing the same thing today and tomorrow that we did yesterday and two weeks ago yesterday. "Major W— sure had a nice-looking nurse in his jeep last night." "Yeah? I read a good story." — JOHN R. SPENCER

King James: American Monarch

BARBARA LONG

Rhetoric II, Theme 12, 1945-1946

"Some wanted to rule, whose fathers had not been kings. . . ."

GLENWAY WESTCOTT¹

AT THE NORTHERN END OF LAKE MICHIGAN, ABOUT fifty miles south of the Straits of Mackinac, lie a group of twelve islands known as the Beaver Islands. Although small — the largest, Big Beaver, being only twelve miles by six — they have great natural beauty, with heavily wooded slopes rising to over forty feet above the blue-green waters of the lake. There, almost a hundred years ago, lived and ruled the only crowned king in America, James Jesse Strang.² Strang was a strange and fascinating character: loved and revered by his followers as "apostle, prophet, seer, revelator, and translator";³ likened by his enemies to Judas, Cain, and Lucifer;⁴ but acknowledged by all who knew him to be a man of great talent, fearless and capable in debate, and equal to any man in general knowledge.⁵

As a child in New York State, Jesse, who later changed his name to James, was small, frail, and sickly. His teachers thought him stupid and snubbed him unmercifully. He made no friends among the children, lacking the strength to join in their rough and tumble games. Left to himself, he read all the books he could find, memorizing whole chapters of the Bible and becoming "such a master of geography that one might fancy that he had traversed the length and breadth of the earth, and his knowledge of universal history was regarded as unlimited."⁶

A term at the Fredonia Male Academy provided him with his first opportunity to excel. "He became aware of the fact that he thought faster and straighter, had a greater store of knowledge, more self-control, more eloquence, and more passion than any boy in school. . . . On the debating platform he became invincible, ruthless, superb."⁷ Slowly there grew in his mind the conviction that he was destined for some high and unusual calling. He longed passionately for fame: "'Fame, fame alone of all the production of man's folly may survive.'"⁸

¹ Quoted in O. W. Riegel, *Crown of Glory: The Life of James Jesse Strang*, p. 1.

² Walter Havighurst, *The Long Ships Passing*, p. 147.

³ Charles Backus, "An American King," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 44 (Sept., 1882), 557.

⁴ Henry Legler, "A Moses of the Mormons," *Parkman Club Publications*, 2 (1897), 126.

⁵ Riegel, *op. cit.*, p. 218. ⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 9. ⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 11. ⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

During his young manhood, Strang was energetic and active. He taught school, dabbled in politics, debated, trained with the militia, lectured on temperance, and participated in the social life of the community. At the age of nineteen he began an intensive study of law, which gained him admittance to the Michigan bar in 1836. Shortly afterward he married Mary Perce, the daughter of a Baptist clergyman, and it seemed for a time that he would settle down to a conventional family life. However, his restlessness returned, and he sought a new outlet for his talents in Burlington, Wisconsin.

Strang was introduced to Mormonism in January, 1844, by a group of itinerant missionaries, who persuaded him to visit Nauvoo, Illinois, where Joseph Smith was then at the zenith of his power. Conversion came promptly, for the religion offered full play to his peculiar talents. Smith soon recognized the force within the new convert and rapidly promoted him.⁹ Within a week after baptism he received an appointment as elder, and three months later he was vested with authority to establish a branch of the church in Wisconsin. He entered into his missionary work with zeal, winning several hundred converts. When Joseph Smith was murdered at Carthage, Illinois, on June 27, Strang felt ready, although a member of the church for only five months, to assume the mantle of the dead prophet. Although he pushed his claim vigorously, basing his alleged appointment on a letter from Smith, he was immediately denounced by the leaders at Nauvoo as a forger and imposter and was excommunicated; but for a time he was one of the chief contenders in the struggle for leadership, which ended in the triumph of Brigham Young.¹⁰

Strang was not discouraged or undone by his excommunication. His followers in Wisconsin still maintained his right to leadership, and with them he started a colony at Voree. His plans called for "a strong benevolent theocracy, which would give him unlimited power and at the same time bestow upon his subjects the blessings of Strang-enlightened government. . . . In Strang, social altruism and the lust for personal power could not be separated. . . . He inevitably became a reformer-dictator, noble in social vision and thoroughly unscrupulous in the practical task of establishing and maintaining his power."¹¹ Anyone who could possibly be made useful in building the colony was welcomed. His converts included all types of humanity. On one extreme were the simple-minded religionists, superstitious and hysterical; on the other were shrewd, selfish adventurers. In between lay all kinds of good and bad. Many of his highest officers were chosen from the rowdiest elements. He hoped to give his followers a communistic econ-

⁹ Charles Strang, "A Michigan Monarchy," *Historical Collections*, 18 (1892), 629.

¹⁰ "An American Kingdom of Mormons," *Magazine of Western History*, 3 (April, 1886), 645.

¹¹ Riegel, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

omy, but for a time he had to deal with the capitalistic world and borrow money where he could. Since he believed that the colony must be totally cut off from Gentile interference in order to absorb his doctrines unmolested, he preached disloyalty to the government; and, as he gained more converts, he grew more and more hostile toward civil authorities.¹² It was during this early period that he voiced many revelations and announced that he had uncovered a number of sacred plates similar to those found by Joseph Smith. As translated by Strang, these plates gave instructions that the Saints found a communistic order, build a temple, and erect a home for their leader.¹³

After a couple of years Strang realized that Voree would never be the ideal colony for which he had planned. He fought dissension within and outside his organization. The different interests of his people had led inevitably to controversy and revolt, and their misunderstandings were heightened by outside interference. It became apparent that the conditions which had driven the Mormons from Nauvoo were threatening Voree and that it would be just a question of time before Gentile influence would annihilate it. Therefore, remembering a beautiful Michigan archipelago which he had seen during his earlier travels, Strang announced that he had received a revelation to rebuild Zion on Beaver Island. He believed the island to be an ideal choice for a seat of power — far away from civil officers whose views might differ from his own, yet close to a profitable line of traffic. There were excellent fish in its waters, abundant forests for lumber, and its soil "needed but to be scratched to yield in multiplied plenty."¹⁴

Early in May a party of five men, led by Strang, landed on Big Beaver. The white inhabitants at the trading post met them coldly and refused to give the group either food or shelter, for they feared that if one Mormon entered, many more would certainly follow. For weeks Strang and his men lived on wild leeks and beechnuts, with the few scraps that could be picked up from the traders' kitchens. Finally, two or three of the men having been given work at the post, they were able to lay in supplies and build a cabin. The first wedge had been entered. And Strang now felt that it was safe to leave them while he journeyed east to obtain more converts.

Slowly at first, but with ever increasing momentum, his followers moved to the island. The first two years were filled with hardships and suffering. The traders' attitude had become definitely hostile. Seeing their fishing grounds invaded and their commercial supremacy threatened, they refused to sell the Mormons provisions and carried out a general program of terrorism. But the building of the kingdom continued. Acres were cleared and planted, a road was cut through the forest, a cabin was erected to house the printing press, and the saw mill ran night and day to supply lumber for

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 64 ff.

¹³ Kimball Young, "Strang, James Jesse," *Dictionary of American Biography*.

¹⁴ Legler, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

houses. By July, 1850, Strang had finished the *Book of the Law of the Lord*, his translation of the plates which he had found in Wisconsin and which served as final authority on all social and theological matters. On its authority, he announced that God had commanded that he be crowned King, and he fixed July 8 as the day of his coronation.¹⁵

Strang assumed his royal powers in the tabernacle, a building eighty feet long and only partially completed at that time. He entered the building dressed in a robe of bright red and accompanied by his council, the twelve elders, and the minor orders of the ministry. The ceremony was performed by George J. Adams, president of the council, a former actor, who succeeded in making it a colorful affair. Its climax was reached when Adams placed the crown, a metal circlet with a projecting cluster of stars, upon Strang's bowed head.¹⁶

Thus began the reign of King James. His word was supreme, and his followers asserted that his was the only valid government on earth. Discipline was strict. The use of coffee, tea, tobacco, and liquor was prohibited; and prostitution and lewdness were discountenanced. The women were commanded to dress in blouses and bloomers. Saturday was decreed to be the Sabbath, and attendance at church was compulsory for all who were physically able. Any who might violate the royal commands were punished with lashes given at a public whipping post.¹⁷

Bowing to expediency, Strang discarded the communistic ideal which he had advocated at Voree. The Saints were allowed to hold title to their lands, but they were required to pay one-tenth of all that they raised or earned into a public fund which was used for improvements and the care of the poor. No other taxes were levied. Schools flourished, and the printing office from which Strang published the *Northern Islander* became a source of strength for the colony.¹⁸

Although at Voree Strang had been outspoken against polygamy, his attitude changed rapidly after he had met and fallen in love with Elvira Field, a dark-eyed school teacher. After another revelation, he assured the Saints that it was God's will for them to have more than one wife; but the practice was not especially favored by the majority of his subjects. None took more than three wives except the King, himself, who finally had five. This limitation was partially due to economic conditions, it being necessary for a man to have the means and ability to give his wives adequate care if he wished to have more than one.

Strang also made a complete turnabout in his former policy of nonresistance and pacifism. "The gospel of turning the other cheek . . . had been tried and found wanting. . . . Whosoever persecuted a Saint on Beaver

¹⁵ Riegel, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

¹⁶ Legler, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

¹⁷ Havighurst, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

¹⁸ Strang, *op. cit.*, p. 633.

Island did so at his peril. . . ."¹⁹ As the Mormons continued to gain in number and cover more territory, stories of their violence and cupidity were told in distant parts of the lakes. They were hated and feared, and vessels nearing the islands doubled their lookout in distrust of the Mormon "pirates."²⁰

Complaints were made to the United States government, and Strang was arrested on charges of piracy, counterfeiting, and robbing the United States mail. He was tried and acquitted at Detroit, after pleading his own case as one "persecuted for righteousness' sake."²¹

While believing that he was a law unto himself, Strang was shrewd in making use of the machinery of the civil law to advance his aims. Twice he was elected to the Michigan legislature; and, through his efforts, the counties of northern Michigan were reorganized so that the Mormons were able to control all of the offices of the county in which Beaver Island was located.²²

Externally, Strang's power was at its zenith by 1856; internally, he faced conflict. Jealousy sprang up between him and the more intelligent of his disciples. Polygamy was a source of discord and was used as an excuse for revolt against his rigid discipline. The women rebelled at having to wear the bloomer costume. Two of his subjects, Thomas Bedford and Alexander Wentworth, who had received public discipline, determined to do themselves what the courts had failed to do. They decided to kill Strang as soon as it could be done with safety. The opportunity came when the *U. S. S. Michigan* returned to the island with a warrant for Strang's arrest. As he accompanied the master of the gunboat to the pier, the two disgruntled subjects sprang from behind a woodpile and fired at him. The King fell, mortally wounded. He died on July 9 at Voree, where he had been taken after his assassination. His assailants surrendered at once to the gunboat and were taken to Mackinac Island, where they were greeted with enthusiastic cheers by the people, who treated them as heroes. They were never brought to trial.

The Saints on Beaver Island were left to feel the full fury of an angry Gentile mob, which burned the tabernacle, sacked the "Royal Press," and drove the subjects from the island, confiscating for themselves the property left behind.

Strang's death meant the end of his kingdom and his church. He had failed to name a successor, although he knew that he was dying. His followers scattered, making no attempt to continue his work. Soon his name was forgotten, except on the shores of Lake Michigan, where stories concerning "King Strang and his pirates" were told and retold for many years.

¹⁹ Riegel, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

²⁰ Havighurst, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Young, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

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Feeding Time among the Guppies

I had had my fish about two weeks when someone asked me, "What do you feed them?"

"Oh," I mumbled, "do you have to feed them?"

The next day I went to my fish dealer and brought some food home. It comes in several grades: fine powder for "fry," as baby fish are called, medium for larger fish, and coarse for adult fish. The package I brought home said nothing on it but "Fry," so I fried it. It came out in big greasy lumps which I dropped into the water. I watched in glee and wonder as the fish nibbled at the lumps, for it had never occurred to me that fish ever ate. I was almost right, for they never ate again. — GEORGE L. CLARK

He Made It!

Chaos broke loose when it was first announced in the house that Alfred, our house's professional idiot, had made the *Green Caldron*. Many studious boys had worked hard on themes but had never received the honor. Why should Alfred, the nitwit, the gadabout, the numskull, the guy who never let us study, have such an honor?

Wait! Who started this malicious rumor? Why, Alfred, of course! Fifteen minds flashed to the fact that it was a lie. Proof was demanded.

Alfred went to his room and came back with a pencil-written theme and the latest issue of the *Green Caldron*. Yes, there it was. Under the title "Rhet as Writ" appeared Alfred's statement: "One day my dog was gone for two days."

— DAVID LOVELL

The "Little" Magazines

DOUGLAS DALES

Rhetoric II, Theme 4, Summer 1946

IN THE PAST FEW YEARS INCREASED CONCERN HAS arisen over the fate of the little magazines, which are shoved into the odd corners of the magazine racks and are consistently avoided by the masses. The odds against these literary ventures are great in spite of their remarkable influence in the world of letters. Such important little magazines as *Poetry*, *Others*, *The Little Review*, and *Transition* have managed to keep their heads above water long enough to be accorded the rewards of fame; and they persist as an unyielding phenomenon of modern publishing.

The little magazines are voices crying out in the wilderness. They are quick to express the emotions of the intellectual advance guard, and exhibit a daring that is frequently terrifying. The woodcuts on their covers are artistically contemptuous, and their formats often exhibit a pleasantly bizarre typography. Their titles are strange and provocative: *Broom*, *Anvil*, and *Angry Penguins*.

In the last half century miscellaneous and fascinating slogans have appeared on their banners, slogans of regionalism, neo-classicism, eclecticism, and proletarian culture. Their experimental crusades are intended to acquaint writers with all sorts of new and different expression. They are to the literary world what the *Medical Journal* is to medicine. The little magazines print articles, stories, and poems which could not sanely be printed anywhere else. *Collier's* is seldom in the mood to accept experiments in language such as the "stream-of-consciousness" style of Joyce or the word-symbolism of Edith Sitwell. The little magazines are delightfully free of the hidebound conservatism of the more popular magazines.

Although the little magazines are not prosperous enough to pay for the contributions of their writers and though many of them die out after the publication of the first few issues, they feature the work of many important writers who value the opportunity of working in an atmosphere in which they can breathe deeply and freely. Writers whose books are selling by the thousands, or playwrights who are regularly featured on Broadway, still feel the urge occasionally to let down their hair and experiment with new forms of literature without exposing themselves to the wrath of the public.

So the little magazines heroically go about their business. They often make the mistake of becoming too freakish and of occasionally printing work that appears to have crept out of caved-in minds; but they also have the cold, clear vision of a mountain climber. They make no apologies, but let their messages fall where they may.

Filipino Barber Shop

JAMES HISER

Rhetoric I, Theme 2, 1945-1946

FOR SOME UNKNOWN REASON, A MERCHANT SAILOR when he is in the states never has time for such a minor chore as a haircut. When the following event took place, I was abroad with the U. S. Merchant Marine.

My ship was lying peacefully at anchor in the harbor of Leyte Island, in the Philippine group. It was a hot, sultry day. The mercury had climbed to around one hundred five degrees; nevertheless, I decided it was time for me to "get my ears set out."

When the sun had almost reached its peak in the cloudless sky, I was slowly plodding down a narrow, dusty village street toward a small, dimly painted sign which read, "HAIR CUT 1 PESO." From the appearance of the other shops in the village, I certainly did not expect an elaborate set-up; so I was not greatly surprised when I came to a very primitive hut.

I stepped beneath the overhanging shade made of bamboo poles thatched with palm leaves. The owner of the shop appeared and cordially invited me in. He was of stocky build with broad shoulders. His skin was swarthy, and his teeth flashed brilliantly white in the noon sunlight as he cast his friendly smile upon me. Like many Filipinos, he wore only a pair of soiled white shorts, confined at his waist by a belt.

I seated myself in the barber chair, which was only a rickety, straight-backed affair made of bamboo placed on a wooden box in the center of the room. Directly in front of this throne hung a dingy, blurred mirror, suspended by ropes from the roof. To my right stood a square table, upon which rested the barber's only tools — a pair of clippers, a dirty-looking comb, and a razor. As I cast my eyes downward, I was somewhat surprised to find that the floor was still in its natural state — dirt. It also showed evidence that hair had been cut here before. I noticed now for the first time an opening at the rear, over which a piece of gray material was draped. Evidently this archway led into the living quarters of the barber.

From time to time, a naked, undernourished child about four years old would come out from behind the drapery, stare wide-eyed at me, and then disappear. Several times a lean-flanked hog scrambled through the shop, pursued by a dog. A little breeze constantly swung the mirror to and fro.

Finally, when the ordeal was over, I stepped from the throne and gave myself the once-over in the looking glass. I could hardly believe the story that it told. Many a barber in swanky shops in the United States could not have matched this master's skill. It was really a sleek hair cut!

The Westinghouse Time Capsule

WILLIAM GOTHARD

Rhetoric II, Theme 7, 1945-1946

EVER SINCE ARCHEOLOGISTS AND HISTORIANS TURNED their talents to deciphering the unrecorded past, human beings have dreamed of simplifying the problem for scientists of the future, by deliberately preparing a message for them. For many years this was nothing more than an idle dream, since science knew too little about the effects of time to design confidently a vessel for the future. Finally, during the early months of 1938, engineers of the Westinghouse Electrical and Manufacturing Company decided that technological advances in the field of metallic alloys had progressed far enough to enable them to undertake the task of building a Time Capsule capable of lasting five thousand years — a period of time almost as long as that of all recorded history.¹

The first step toward the completion of this great project was, quite clearly, to form a Time Capsule Committee, which, in turn, could establish subcommittees to study the various questions relating to the plan. The committee was carefully chosen from the nation's leading archeologists, historians, and technical and scientific men;² and it went to work immediately in order to have the capsule ready for display at the Westinghouse exhibit at the New York World's Fair, which was scheduled to open in a little over a year.

After careful deliberation the committee was able to divide the entire project into three problems: (1) how to build a vessel capable of lasting five thousand years; (2) how to leave word of its whereabouts for historians of the future; and (3) how to select and preserve its contents.³

A subcommittee headed by M. W. Smith, Westinghouse manager of engineering, undertook the task of solving the first problem — that of designing and constructing the Time Capsule.⁴ The biggest task of this department was to find a metal or a metallic alloy of considerable hardness to be entirely resistant to corrosion. After much research involving complicated chemical experiments, they discovered a new alloy of copper, Cupaloy,⁵ which most nearly fulfilled the specifications.

For reasons of strength and convenience, the Time Capsule is shaped like

¹G. Edward Pendray, "The Story of the Time Capsule," *Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institution*, 1939 Edition, p. 533. ²*Ibid.*, p. 534.

³"The Westinghouse Time Capsule," *Science*, 88 (Oct. 7, 1938), 326. ⁴*Ibid.*

⁵Composition of Cupaloy: copper 99.4 per cent, chromium 0.5 per cent, silver 0.1 per cent.

a torpedo, seven and one-half feet long and eight and three-eighths inches in diameter. The outer shell consists of seven cast segments of Cupaloy, threaded, screwed together tightly, and sealed with molten asphalt. The walls of the Cupaloy segments are one inch thick, thus leaving an inner crypt six and three-eighths inches in diameter and six feet nine inches long. The crypt is lined with Pyrex glass, set in a water-repellent petroleum base wax. Washed, evacuated, and filled with humid nitrogen,⁶ an inert, preservative gas, this glass inner crypt is a perfect container for the "cross section of our time," as its contents might well be called.

The second great problem, that of making reasonably sure that archeologists of 6939 would know of the historical treasure consigned to them, was solved by preparing a Book of Record of the Time Capsule and distributing copies of it to libraries, museums, monasteries, convents, lamaseres, temples, and other places of safe keeping throughout the world.⁷

The Book of Record was prepared after detailed consultation with libraries, museum authorities, printers, and bookbinders; and suggestions for binding were obtained from the office of National Archives, the New York Public Library, the American Library Association, and other sources. The United States Bureau of Standards provided specifications for permanent paper and inks. And, in order to secure the greatest possible strength, each of the 3,650 copies which were printed was sewn together by hand with linen thread.⁸

The Book of Record tells how to calculate the date when the capsule should be opened, by use of the Gregorian, Chinese, Jewish, Mohammedan, and Shinto calendars, and by astronomical time if no calendars survive.⁹ Also given in the Book of Record are (1) the exact latitude and longitude of the capsule's well, calculated to less than an inch; (2) directions for locating the capsule with electromagnetic finders in case geographical changes in five thousand years should falsify the latitude and longitude figures; (3) an ingenious Key to the English Language devised by John P. Harrington, of the Smithsonian Institution, which, by means of simple diagrams, explains the peculiarities of English grammar and shows how each of the thirty-three sounds of English is pronounced; (4) messages to the future from three famous men of our time: Dr. Albert Einstein, Dr. Robert Millikan, and Dr. Thomas Mann; (5) a table of common measures in the English and metric systems, including a statement of the length of the standard meter in terms of the wave length of red cadmium light — a constant that will never

⁶ Pendray, *op. cit.*, p. 534.

⁷ "For 6939 A. D. Readers," *Newsweek*, 12 (Sept. 26, 1938), 439.

⁸ Pendray, *op. cit.*, p. 536.

⁹ "Five Thousand Mile Journey," *Time*, 36 (Sept. 30, 1940), 59.

vary, no matter what other systems of measurement are in use five thousand years from now.¹⁰

Choosing what was to go into the limited space of the Time Capsule crypt proved perhaps the greatest problem of all, for nothing short of an enormous gallery of vaults could accommodate all the objects and records of any civilization. The Time Capsule Committee turned for advice to archeologists, historians, and authorities in virtually every field of science, medicine, and the arts; and on the basis of their suggestions, thirty-five articles of common use, ranging from a slide rule to a woman's hat, were chosen. Also included are about seventy-five samples of common materials, ranging from fabrics of various kinds, metals, alloys, plastics, and synthetics, to a lump of anthracite coal and a dozen kinds of common seeds.¹¹

These material items are, however, only supplementary to a voluminous essay about us and our times, reduced to microfilm. On three and one-half spools (1,100 feet) of this film, ten million printed words and more than one thousand photographs were reproduced. Besides depicting such expected details as how we live, what we eat, and what our religions and philosophies are, the film contains a dictionary of slang, Hoyle's card rules, the *World Almanac*, a Sears, Roebuck catalogue, excerpts from the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, and excerpts from all kinds of newspapers and periodicals.¹²

Once these articles were assembled, the next step was to label them, and then place them into the Pyrex crypt. All objects were wrapped with heavy rag ledger paper, tied with linen twine, and labeled again on the outside of the wrapper. Then, according to weight, with the heaviest article on the bottom, each object was placed into the crypt, and all spaces between objects were cushioned and made firm with glass wool.

Immediately following the packing, the Pyrex inner crypt was placed upon a glass-lathe, heated, and sealed. The air was then drawn out through a small opening, the contents were washed with inert gas, and the crypt was filled with nitrogen, to which just enough moisture was added to equal the humidity of an ordinary room. Since its contents are fully protected from corrosion and decomposition by the removal of oxygen and excess moisture, it is expected that the articles will be as fresh five thousand years from now as they were the day the crypt was sealed.

The final step in the preparation of the capsule was the insertion of the glass crypt into the Cupaloy shell. After being wrapped in several layers of glass tape, the crypt was inserted, held in place, and waterproof wax was poured in around the glass. "Shrink-fitting" the final Cupaloy joint was then accomplished by chilling the heavy cap to several degrees below zero with dry ice, then turning it into place on tapered threads. When permitted to

¹⁰ *Book of Record of the Time Capsule*, pp. 10-48.

¹¹ Pendray, *op. cit.*, p. 537.

¹² For complete list of contents, see *Ibid.*, pp. 541-553.

warm up to the same temperature as the rest of the capsule, the metal expanded and caused the threads to seize so tightly as to form an air-and-water-tight joint.

At high noon on September 23, 1938, the precise moment of the autumnal equinox, A. W. Robertson, chairman of the board of the Westinghouse Electrical and Manufacturing Company, committed the Time Capsule to posterity with these words: "May the Time Capsule sleep well. When it is awakened five thousand years from now, may its contents be found a suitable gift to our far-off descendants."¹³

Many questions have been asked about the Time Capsule project, the foremost one being how it will be protected from thieves or persons whose curiosity is greater than their sense of obligation to the future. This problem of keeping the Capsule safe from vandals is well taken care of by the site selected for burial. Sunk fifty feet below the surface of the ground in swampy soil, it can be recovered only after an expensive and difficult engineering operation costing many times the possible material worth of the capsule and its salable contents.

A ten-foot black granite monument, marking the exact location of the Time Capsule in Flushing Meadow Park on the old site of the New York World's Fair, was dedicated at noon on Tuesday, September 23, 1941. An inscription on the base of the shaft reads: "The Time Capsule, deposited fifty feet beneath this spot on September 23, 1938; preserving for the future a record of the history, faiths, arts, sciences and customs of the people then alive. Scientists and engineers designed it; scholars chose its contents; the Westinghouse Electrical and Manufacturing Company placed it here at the beginning of the New York World's Fair, 1939-1940, to endure for five thousand years."¹⁴

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 539.

¹⁴ "The Westinghouse Time Capsule," *Science*, 94 (Sept. 12, 1941), 251.

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Civilian Status

SANDOR H. COHEN

Rhetoric I, Theme 11, 1945-1946

THE BARRACKS WERE HOT. THE TROPICAL SUN WAS beating on the tin roofs. Electric fans served only to circulate blasts of hot air. Naked bodies sprawled on wet sheets. Limp cigarettes dangled from moist finger tips. It was too hot to move.

"What you gonna do when you get out, Johnny?"

"Park my fanny on an iceberg."

"Naw — I mean it. Greg says he's going back to school. He only has a year to go."

"So what!"

"I'd like to go to school, too, but I guess if the war lasts five more years I'll be pretty old. Hell, I guess I'll marry Ruth if she's still around."

"What for? Thought she learned to fold Navy blues."

"Don-know — she's not a bad kid."

"I'll tell you what I'm gonna do. I'm gonna get a good job and put in for some high living."

"What kinda job?"

"Hell, the guys on state side are all pulling down dough. I guess the boom will last a few years after the war, and I intend to make my kill."

Soldiers staring at low ceilings — thinking, wondering, hoping.

A standard piece of equipment, a question, an echo through boats and barracks all over the world: "What will I do when I get out?" I had talked about it and wondered about it since my entry into service. I did not feel that the world was obliged to cut a path for me. I would not ask for a free ticket when I got home. I would only ask recognition for doing a man's job in a creditable manner. Four years in the army had given me a wealth of self-confidence. I felt ready to start building my future. I was ready and impatient, but within myself I knew I wouldn't be given the opportunity. The folks back home were too far away. They couldn't see their sons becoming men on the double.

* * * * *

"Good to have you home, Son. Here, have some of your mother's good cooking."

"Pass the salt and pepper."

"You never seasoned my food before."

"Sorry, my tastes have changed."

"By the way, a lot of your young friends are married. What are you going to do now that you're out?"

"The folks will be over this evening and you can tell us all about the war. Tell us about the empty cot next to you. What are you going to do now that you're out? School starts next week."

"Hello, Uncle Joe. Good to see you."

"Hello, Tom and Betty. Good to see you."

"Hello, soldier. WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO NOW THAT YOU'RE OUT?"

Twenty-eight years ago our fathers came marching home victors of another battle. They took off their uniforms and tried to get back to their old ways of life. They had their difficulties, but they forgot. People didn't realize that the modern soldier is no different from his father. They were perplexed when their sons said they wanted to loaf for a couple of months. Sure the war has changed a lot of the boys, but not mine. My boy is the same sweet child we sent away. I felt as though I had just returned from a two-weeks' vacation at scout camp.

* * * * *

"You may go in to see Mr. Morgan now."

"Hello, John, how's the old soldier. It sure is good to see you. What are you going to do now you're out? Guess you'll be anxious to get back to school. We've done some expanding around here since you left. I tell you this war has kept me pretty busy. Sometimes I wish I'd been in the good old army. We've got another kid working part time in your place. By the way, if you don't get into school right away let me know. Nothing I wouldn't do for a vet. We'll find some little chore for you to do."

"Good day, Mr. Morgan."

I did not expect to step into an important job. I only asked a chance to get a start. I asked for a place where a man could learn a job and advance according to his ability. I was offered the same opportunities as a kid just out of high school, for that's what I was in their eyes.

* * * * *

"What can I do for you?"

"I'd like to see some suits."

"This way, please. Here is the only one we have in your size."

"Jeez, what the hell are they packing potatoes in these days?"

"You're lucky to find one that fits you."

"I've been dreaming of civilian clothes for four years — but this."

"You won't do any better. Of course if you want to pay the price I can tell you where to go."

"I can tell you where to go for free!"

I had heard the pretty speeches on how we were going to curb inflation.

I had been thankful that men were thinking about this important problem. Only by saving the value of our dollar could we prevent the inevitable depression. As I walked from store to store I seemed to feel the hope of national economic security slipping from our control. I thought of the greedy little men who would have food on their tables through a depression — men who were pushing prices to the top by withholding merchandise, causing strikes, and operating black markets. I thought of these men who had done their share to cause the war, and who were so little affected by it. I longed for the simplicity of army life.

* * * * *

"I've decided to go back to school."

"Good, I think you've made a wise decision, Son."

"Decision hell — I'm just following the line of least resistance."

I can't complain. The powers are giving me a chance to obtain a free education. Here is your free ride, Mr. Veteran. I open my eyes. Does anyone give anything away? Is this the gag in my mouth? Am I being put out to pasture while a bunch of incompetents run my country? What was said about the veteran running the show after the war was over?

I feel like a traitor. I know that with an education behind me I will be more fit to do my share, but will there be anything left to work with? Yes, Mr. Veteran, take your free education, organize your little clubs and drink your beer, stay on your campus and make your noise. The voice of the campus is the voice of youth. The voice of youth is a raucous sound, and we don't intend to have the dignity of our politicians disturbed by it. Do not worry. Older and wiser heads are sailing your ship. Omit the fact that we let the kids pull us off the rocks when our navigation was a little off.

I am told that I will be in a far better position to face the world when I get out of school. What happens if I come out an inexperienced college graduate at a time when there are long lines and babies have swollen bellies? People forget those things. They forget depression as soon as their stomachs are full. They forget war as soon as the parade is over. I won't forget — I'll remember trying to sleep next to an empty bunk.

Labor Situation à la Hobo

The thought of the hobo is for today — tomorrow is yet to come. He wishes an existence unfettered by the bonds of a conventional society. His inclination to work is slight. If he sees a man at his chores in the hot sun, he is distressed. He will pity him, sympathize with him, or even shed tears if the laborer is reduced to that state; but to give support other than moral does not enter into his thoughts. Labor is beneath him and only strict compulsion will cause him to stoop to it. Labor, in the sense of its monotony and compulsion, is to him one of the bonds of conventional society. — ARTHUR RADZIEWICZ

Contact Lenses

WILLIAM N. EDWARDS

Rhetoric II, Theme 4, 1945-1946

TODAY THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE THE WORLD OVER ARE enjoying better vision than they have ever had before, with the aid of a little-known but very important optical development — contact lenses. These lenses serve the same purpose as ordinary eyeglasses, but are made and used in an entirely different manner.

Contact lenses are simply ovately molded pieces of optical glass or plastic which are ground to the necessary dimensions required by the eyes of the "patient." Since the eyes of each individual vary in shape, size, and degree of refractive error, a separate mold must be made for each eye. The eyeball is "frozen" in its socket with a special solution, and then is covered with a pasty compound; after the mold has been allowed to harden for three to five minutes, it is removed with a suction cup. The other eye then gets the same treatment. Finally, when both molds have been made and removed from the eyes, a solution counteracting the first one is put into the eyes to "thaw" them out.

The molds furnish the exact shape and size for the final material used, usually either glass or plastic. The resulting lenses are ground very exactly and, after being test-fitted for accuracy, are ready for wear. Now comes the crucial point in the process, for if the lenses, no matter how exactly ground, are not fitted properly, the wearer will not be able to see. As the name implies, contact lenses fit close to the eyeball, with the ground portion corresponding in size and position to the pupil of the eye. However, a liquid solution is needed between the lens and the eye, so that the lens will not stick to the eyeball and thus be both difficult and painful to remove; for this purpose, a mixture of bicarbonate of soda and distilled water is used.

Let us assume that the left lens is put in first. Holding it in the left hand between the thumb and forefinger, with the convex surface supported by the index finger, the wearer fills the lens with the solution. Then, bending at the waist to avoid spilling the liquid, and at the same time holding the eyelids apart with the right hand, he places the lens against the eyeball, slides it under the upper lid, and then pulls the lower lid over it.

Obviously, considerable practice is necessary to do this correctly. If the above procedure is not followed, bubbles will appear in the liquid, causing distortion and a lack of clarity. Then, too, the wearer must experiment with various proportions of the mixture to determine the length of time the lenses may be worn before they cloud or before the fluid causes the eyes to smart. Once the proper mixture is determined, it is simply a matter of time until a

tolerance for the lenses is acquired. Normally after about four months the wearer is able to use them all day, every day, though at the beginning he usually cannot wear them more than three or four hours without discomfort. With the aid of a special suction cup provided for the purpose, the user can remove the lenses at any time simply by placing the cup against the lens and pulling downward and outward.

One reason for wearing contact lenses is the fact that since they are transparent, they are unnoticeable to anyone unaware of their presence. Many stage, screen, and radio stars wear them, unbeknown to their audiences. In addition, contacts are worn by many athletes, pilots, and others whose professions are such that the use of ordinary glasses is impractical. Since, by being worn much closer to the eye than are ordinary "specs," this type of lens makes for better sight correction, it more efficiently answers the needs of most people with poor eyesight. Contact lenses also appeal to people because they cannot be broken easily, being made of plastic.

Because the initial cost of contact lenses is so high as to discourage replacements, people who own them are not likely to lose them. At the present time, the prices range from one hundred to one hundred seventy-five dollars, exclusive of the eye examinations; the variation in price depends on the amount of labor required to grind and polish the individual lenses, a task which requires a highly-skilled workman. Some people might consider the price excessive, and perhaps it is; however, as skilled labor becomes more available, and more efficient techniques are developed, the price will go down.

Personally, contacts are more than worth their cost to me, in that I am now able to participate in all sports without fear of breaking or losing them; another factor I like is that regardless of heat, rain, or snow, the lenses will not cloud up as will ordinary glasses and therefore are desirable for all outdoor activities.

In conclusion, it might be said that with the increase in the number of people wearing contact lenses, will come a corresponding decrease in the use of ordinary spectacles. These new lenses have proved their effectiveness; they represent a big step towards scientific simplification of one of our biggest problems, that of accurately correcting poor eyesight.

Critic for the Intelligentsia

The critic, of the intelligentsia type, looks down on everything that is popular with the masses, just on general principles. As he sees himself, he is a fortunately enlightened mortal whose divine right and duty it is to sit upon his throne, be it ash can or Chippendale, and to decide for others what is to be considered good or bad in music, art, literature, or any other of the fine arts. His public, as he sees it, from the millions who may read his column down to the one or two who may be so unfortunate as to be trapped into a conversation with him, are either enlightened fellow aesthetes, or morons. In short, he is an intellectual snob, and no snob is quite as nasty or narrow as an intellectual one. — JAMES H. KANE

Technocracy: Its Rise and Fall

WILLIAM LOUIS RABY

Rhetoric II, Theme 7, 1945-1946

THE YEAR WAS 1932. THE WORLD LAY IN THE THROES of a fearful depression. The peoples of many of the countries of the earth were appalled by what seemed to them the hopelessness of the future. In Germany, millions of men and women were flocking to the standard of Adolf Hitler, following the only man who seemed to be marching towards a definite goal. In the United States, much the same sort of thing was happening, only on a smaller scale, and in a more temporary manner. Technocracy was the topic of the moment, stirring bitter opposition on the one hand, and an almost religious fervor on the other. What was this thing that the American people grasped at for a few short months, and whence did it come?

The term "Technocracy" was coined by an engineer named Smyth. In March, 1919, he published an article entitled "Technocracy — National Industrial Management." According to Mr. W. H. Smyth, Technocracy "implies scientific reorganization of national resources and energy, coordinating industrial democracy to fit the will of the people."¹ Also in 1919 there was published a book by Thorstein Veblen, *The Engineer and the Price System*, which stated many of the points that were later to make up the Technocracy of the "thirties."²

But the Technocracy that was to become a national issue did not actually make its start until 1920, when a number of engineers, together with both social and physical scientists, banded together in a voluntary and private organization to study the functioning of the social mechanisms of the North American continent. The director of this group was a man named Howard Scott.³ Thorstein Veblen, the author mentioned above, was one of the members.⁴ Little was heard from this group for twelve years. Then, in *Nation* magazine on September 7, 1932, an article entitled "Towards a New System: Technocracy's Report" was published. Three months later the storm broke. Technocracy was on the lips of the American people, and in their publications.

Howard Scott became one of the men of the moment. His every word was hung upon, and an interview with him was a prize to any publication. For years, he had been buttonholing people, talking Technocracy to all he could

¹ "Technocracy: Definition and Origin," *Nation*, 135 (Dec. 28, 1932), 646.

² E. B. Chaffee, "What Is Technocracy?", *Christian Century*, 50 (Jan. 4, 1933), 11-13.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 12. ⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

get to listen, and had been overjoyed when a few lines were devoted to his subject in a newspaper. Now it was all changed. The depression, with its suffering and disillusionment, had routed orthodoxy, and heterodox ideas seemed less crazy. Technocracy was the most important idea of the day.⁵

Only one article, though, was ever published under Scott's name. As the tide of words increased to a flood, he was prevailed upon to edit an article in *Harper's* magazine. It was titled, "Technology Smashes the Price System." In it were set forth three weaknesses in the existing price system:

1. The mechanics of placing purchasing power in the hands of the consumers is the exchange of money for the consumer's time (or labor) and technology is reducing the total amount of time required.

2. The working of the price system has forced the manufacturers to reduce the total number employed rather than to distribute the amount of time required among the total number of available workers. Technology has now advanced to the point where it has substituted energy for man hours on an equal basis and where the distribution of human labor becomes impossible.

3. Through increased investment in machines—made necessary by the increasing rate at which they go out of date—the manufacturer is forced to reduce the proportion of his costs which go to labor. This again inexorably works against the increase of wages and the distribution of time.⁶

This view of things, that the price system had broken down, was immediately challenged by the voices of industry. Said James D. Mooney, President of General Motors Export Corporation, as quoted in the *Literary Digest*: "The breakdown of 1929 was not a mechanical breakdown. It was caused by a lack of understanding and respect for economic laws."⁷

Howard Scott, and other persons connected with Technocracy, did not escape attacks. These ranged from smears on Scott's private life to doubts cast upon his standing as an engineer.⁸ These could not, however, completely drown out the charges made by Technocracy, or the things it said it could give.

Technocracy had five main points:

1. It is possible to deal with the perplexing economic facts just as science has already dealt with the physical facts of nature.

2. Social change should be measured by the per capita rate of energy conversion.

3. No solution of the unemployment problem is possible under the price system at the rate machines are replacing men.

4. The debt claims against industry (returns on investments) are absurd.

5. There is a remedy. Let the technicians run the industries for the benefit of society, without the interference of profit-seeking businessmen.⁹

⁵ F. L. Allen, *Since Yesterday*, New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1939, p. 89.

⁶ "Technology Smashes the Price System," *Harper's*, 166 (Jan., 1933), 139.

⁷ "Technocracy; Boon, Blight, or Bunk," *Literary Digest*, 114 (Dec. 31, 1932), 6.

⁸ Chaffee, *op. cit.*, p. 12. ⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-13.

"The revolutionary shift from manual to machine labor has given us a new world. Realization of this fact puts Utopia within our grasp." Thus spoke E. B. Chaffee in the *Christian Century*. It was this Utopian dream that held the people and stirred their imaginations. All about them they could see desolation and suffering, and yet they had the same machines and the same workers that they had had in 1929, when the boom had reached its crest. Clearly, there was something wrong with the existing order of things. Technocracy told them what was wrong, and promised them a world in which all could share in the higher standard of living brought about by the machine age. With a minimum of labor, they would be able to live as only those in the higher income brackets under the old system could live. Industry would be operated so as to benefit all of the people, and not just a few. This was the appeal that Technocracy had. Its drawback lay in the lack of a definite plan. The evils of things as they were, were all pointed out. The way things should be was shown to the people. There was, however, only a vague plan for obtaining Utopia.

Hamstrung by its lack of a blueprint for achieving Utopia, and shouted down by its opponents in industry, Technocracy waned. It went, as far as the public was concerned, almost with the same speed it came. Whether it has really died out is another question. Perhaps the next depression will write the final chapter of the story of Technocracy. And perhaps, if there is another depression, Technocracy will have a plan.

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Sartorial Contrast

Hale's dress is always at one of two extremes. When he chooses, he can dress far better than the average student. His array of gabardines, flannels, tweeds, coverts, and worsteds would put to shame the entire stock of some small clothier. You feel positively uncomfortable in his sartorial shadow. When he approaches, you can see his eyes travel over you from your \$4.50 saddle shoes to your \$2.95 plaid shirt, and his disapproval shows. He makes no comment, just looks with disdain etched into his features. On the other hand, when Hale chooses to stagnate in a sweat-shirt that won the war of 1812, a pair of moccasins that are held together by a strong will, and a pair of slacks that could walk by themselves, no power on earth could convince him that he isn't dressed properly for everything but a king's wedding. — VICTOR B. ROBIN

The House on East Penn

LILLIAN ROSPUTYNSKI

Rhetoric II, Theme 6, 1945-1946

ACROSS THE LOW SLOPING ROOFS, THE SUN, SPREAD in all its splendor, created a great panorama of red and gold. A horse and buggy clattered down the narrow, brick streets and stopped in front of the oldest mansion which the small town of Hoopeston claimed for its own.

A young woman in her early twenties stepped from the carriage onto the curbstone, tied the reins around the hitching post, swept aside her driving veil, and mounted the wide, stone steps leading up to the spacious front porch of the mansion. Taking from her bag a small key, she unlocked the heavy oaken door and disappeared from sight.

Those passing by could hear the tinkle of china and silver as the servants prepared the evening meal. Laughter floated from within, and one would think that here, beyond a doubt, lived an exceedingly happy family. Somewhere in the house, the light chords of a then popular song were blended by young eager voices.

An old man, slowly walking home from work, looked enviously at the great house sprawled luxuriously over a half-acre of land and surrounded by rich, green shrubs.

* * * * *

At the head of the dining room table, Emmett L. Tyler gazed across the broad expanse of white linen at the members of his family. Mrs. Tyler, who sat at the foot of the table, was small, dark, and still lovely at fifty-two. To her left, Clarice, the young woman whom we watched enter the house, lingered over her dessert. Across the table, Emmett Jr., twenty-four, having finished before the others, slouched in the fragile white chair.

An outsider would have thought it a pleasant picture, but this was an odd family. Clarice, selfish and self-centered, thought of nothing but the furtherance of Clarice; young Emmett was a spendthrift — an undependable, lying, egotistical upstart. The head of the family, called E. L. by his business associates, was a bitter, penny-pinching old man. He couldn't remember ever having had a friend, because he considered friendship an incumbrance in his moneyed world.

So, the four of them sat sipping fine old wine taken from Mr. Tyler's wine cellar. Through the silence that always follows a good dinner, the dull thud of the brass knocker echoed through the high ceilinged rooms. Footsteps sounded across the highly polished hardwood floor of the hall, and

voices were heard as the maid conferred with the caller. The great door closed, and the maid entered the dining room. Excusing herself she said, "A telegram for you, Mr. Tyler." She left; silence fell, and the clock took over the conversation as three faces were turned to the man at the head of the table while he opened the yellow message.

* * * * *

Thin piano wires of rain lashed the sky to the earth, a dog barked, a cock crowed, and the day had started. A newsboy hurried from house to house throwing the town's ten-page daily on every porch.

Soon the neighboring houses showed signs of life; curtains flapped in the early morning breeze, and smells of bacon and coffee were wafted through open kitchen doors and windows.

Mrs. Holmes, preparing breakfast, discovered that her coffee bin was empty and slipped into a fresh apron before running next door to borrow some from the Tylers' cook. As she bustled up the back steps, across the ivy-covered porch, and into the sunny kitchen, she thought it peculiar that there were no signs of life.

No one was in the kitchen, nor was there anyone in the dining room. In fact, the dinner dishes of the night before were still on the table, and the candles had burned down completely, the wax spilling over on the crystal candlesticks and onto the snowy linen.

The shades were drawn in all the rooms on the first floor. The stuffy smell of cooking mingled with the odor of wine and cigar smoke. The front door stood open, and the breeze had blown one of Mrs. Tyler's prized china figurines from a small mahogany table which stood near the foot of the winding staircase.

Perhaps it was the silence — call it premonition — that sent Mrs. Holmes to the telephone to call the police. Whatever it was, she felt, beyond a doubt, that something was wrong.

When the police arrived, there was a handful of neighbors grouped near the door, curiosity displayed on each sleepy face. Several hours later, the police had completed their investigation, which had, in more ways than one, proved fruitless.

They had discovered this: the family had left during the night, probably before midnight; they had taken only those things which they could carry; their servants had been paid and discharged without explanation. No attempt had been made to lock the house or even to straighten it up. The Tyler women had left a good part of their jewelry and many of their heavy silk and satin gowns. An imported cigar had burned out in the ash tray; a half-packed valise lay on the great mahogany desk with legal papers and documents scattered near it.

The desk chair was overturned, and the picture concealing the wall safe above the desk was askew. The tiny door of the vault was open — the interior, empty.

* * * * *

Today the mystery of the Tyler house and its occupants remains unsolved. In 1897, the City National Bank of Hoopeston and the Prudential Insurance Company took over the property of Emmett L. Tyler.

The passer-by sees only a shattered shell of a house, badly in need of paint, broken windows, and rickety stairs leading up to a shabby front porch. The brass knocker, once dazzling to the eye, is tarnished. It has been touched by nothing but the cold fall rains and the sleet and snow of winter. The once beautiful gardens have been conquered by Queen Anne's lace and wild violets. The fish pool in the side yard is a vacant eye staring unblinkingly at the sky.

Even today people guess and wonder and sometimes laugh nervously as they pass the rusted iron gate. It has been said that late at night a pale, flickering light can be seen through the dirt-streaked panes of glass. At such times, people like to think that one of the Tylers has returned in search of something. What, no one knows.

Every year, on the twenty-ninth of September, the old house creaks and groans as though inhabited by a thousand devils. On this night, people claim that they have heard low voices and the tinkling of silver against china. Those more imaginative swear that on such occasions soft eerie chords of music and the sound of people singing have issued forth into the dim autumn twilight. Few people venture past the squeaky old gate after dark, and mothers forbid their children to play there in the great spacious gardens surrounding this house of mystery.

School Days

We returned to Germany to continue our schooling. For our protection we had to report to school earlier than the others, were dismissed earlier for lunch and in the afternoon, but by the time we neared our homes the other grammar schools were dismissed also. If our walks in Switzerland had been peaceful and beautiful, these walks home were horrible and frightening. Bad names and rhymes were yelled at us; stones, dirt, and bags were thrown at us; our coats were pulled off; our feet were tackled; Jewish boys were slapped; one of us always had a bloody nose.

We Jewish children never walked home alone. We would take different routes, but if we did not meet one "gang" of youngsters we met another; the same situation occurred after classes in the afternoon. Often Jewish boys, who were "picked on" more severely than girls, were absent from school the following day because of injuries they had received. Once in a great while some child's parent would accompany us, but to no avail. The attackers either ran away after hurting us, or went right on as before, since they knew no Jew, young or old, could ever do anything harmful to them or their family. — RUTH HEILBRONNER

December, 1946

Little Hoiman

DWIGHT B. MITCHELL

Rhetoric II, Theme 6, 1945-1946

MY OUTFIT, WHAT WAS LEFT OF IT, WAS PULLED OFF the line during February of '45 so that we might rest, pick up replacements, and prepare for another death-dealing drive against the Wehrmacht. We were sent to Holland, where we were given places in warm, friendly Dutch homes. The Dutch people did not have much, but what they did have, they were willing to share with us. It was a pleasant, comfortable atmosphere and they treated us as friends. That means a lot to a man from combat where he meets nothing but enemy. We relaxed for the first time in months and scraped and soaked ourselves clean of the mud, stench, and bearded growth that had accumulated on our bodies. We were free from the pounding concussion of the shells and the plaintive whine of the singing shrapnel and bullets. It was wonderful and we soaked it in.

The second day there, several of the boys got hold of athletic equipment, and we went to a field to play some good American baseball and line up a few boxing matches. It was good to get the feel of a bat in our hands, swing it lazily as we walked to the plate, and then prepare to lash out at the arching ball as it dropped across the plate. For our grandstand of cheering rooters, we had the kids from the village, who watched with wide-eyed enjoyment and laughed for the first time in months as they saw the fun of good clean sport. I swung at, threw, and caught the elusive baseball for hours until I was about done-in. After the game, I put on my battle jacket, hitched up my ammo belt, slung my rifle to my shoulder, and drifted towards my new home. As I crossed the field, I saw a mob of yelling kids that formed a circle around several of the boys. I mosied over to see what all the comotion was about.

As I reached the circle, I saw Sergeant Berry holding a pair of boxing gloves over his head as he yelled, "Take it easy, you guys. You'll all get a chanct." The kids jumped, shouted, and pushed as they grabbed for the gloves so that they could fight among themselves and show off their strength to the worshipped American soldiers. Here was a chance for them to play a game. Berry finally chose two lucky lads and brought them to the center of the ring. They were about ten years old, their faces glowing in anticipation of the sport that was to follow. "One of you Joes act as this little fellow's second," shouted Berry. I shoved my way to the smaller of the two boys, dropped my rifle, unhitched my ammo belt, knelt to the ground and fitted "little Hoiman's" glove to his outstretched hand. As I put on his gloves, I looked over my boy. His clothes were patched and torn, and he

was underfed. He wasn't very big, even for a kid of ten. When the gloves were on, he could hardly move his arms. It was his eyes that held me. His face was beaming and his limbs were quivering with thrill while those big blue eyes of his sparkled with inborn intelligence and excitement.

I finished tying his gloves, patted his back and said, "OK?" His face was pulverized by a big grin as he answered, "OK," and went to the center of the ring to meet his opponent. The first round he slugged it out with the other kid while I yelled instructions. The fellows laughed and the other kids screamed in excitement. At the end of the round, I straightened his cap, dried his face, and gave him instructions when I found that he could understand English. As soon as it was time for the second round to start, the little rascal ran out swinging before his opponent even came out of the corner. It was exciting to watch him slug and be slugged with childish recklessness. When the fight was over, "Hoiman" was sporting as pretty a shiner as I had ever seen. I could hardly take his gloves off as he wriggled and jumped and told me of what he would do in the next fight.

By the time I had finished taking off his gloves and washing his eye, the fellows were gone with all the kids taking after them. I stooped to pick up my gun, but "Hoiman" beat me to it and slung it to his shoulder as he babbled on about the fight. "Little Hoiman" was a sight walking along carrying my gun. It was as long as he was tall, and he had to lean to one side to keep the butt-plate from dragging on the ground. As we walked toward the village, we talked of his family, my family, boxing, baseball, and a million other things. I was surprised at the fluency with which he spoke English. "How come you speak English so well, Hoiman?"

"In Holland, we all learn English in school. My mother and father wanted me to learn English as they knew that the American soldiers would come and drive the Nazis from our country." We had reached my temporary home, so I took the rifle, said good-bye, and went in to shave and wash up.

About chow time, I came out of the house and formed with my platoon to march to the kitchen. As I fell in, I saw "Little Hoiman" frantically waving to me from the sidewalk. I waved back. That was all he needed for an excuse to run over to me. The platoon sergeant gave us "Forward march." "Little Hoiman" took my hand and marched off with me. When we fell out and formed a chow line, I held on to his hand. I could see the poor kid was terribly hungry. Why shouldn't I share my food with my friend? After "Hoiman" and I had finished eating and he had washed the mess gear, we went for a walk. We just walked and talked. People in America would have thought I was taking my kid brother to the movies.

It got so that every day "Hoiman" and I would go for our walk after we had had our chow. During the afternoons, we would go behind a hill

and lie in the sun as I eluded the search of the first sergeant. It was pleasant being with the kid. He was a likable chap and gave me the companionship I needed. I no longer made good friends in the company. I found that it didn't pay. The fellows were always getting hit, and when a good friend gets hit, it takes something out of you. "Little Hoiman" and I were pals.

I'll never forget the day we left. It was early in the morning, and I hadn't seen the kid. We were loaded on the trucks that were pointed towards the Front. As the convoy jumped to life and headed for the miserable hell of combat, I heard a high voice above the motors, yelling, "Dwight, Dwight." I looked over the side of the truck and saw "Hoiman" running alongside with his hand stretched up for mine. I leaned over and touched him as we pulled away. The little Dutch kid disappeared in the distance. God bless him.

Nov. 13, 1943 — bad weather

Darkness covered the earth, but over the mountains faint rays of light marked the dawn of a new and beautiful day. Voices and the din of a jeep as it bounced along the air strip broke the stillness of early morning. The jeep pulled up and stopped in the shadow of a transport plane and five vague figures got out only to disappear into the plane. Voices could be heard again as lights flashed on inside.

"Oil?"

"Check!"

"Gas?"

"Full tanks!"

"Hey, what's the heading?"

A boy looked up from a scramble of maps and charts, gave the pilot a big smile and then replied, "Better take a one-twenty true."

The pilot nodded in satisfaction and everyone turned to his job. The pilot and co-pilot checked instruments and prepared to start the two giant engines. Navigator and radio operator talked softly, as they made their required pre-flight inspections. The subjects of conversation were always the same, food, girls, or home. This morning their thoughts were of home, and each man took turns telling a little story of his early life. Pre-flights completed they sat back and quietly waited for the pilot to check with the tower.

"Tontuda Tower, this is four one seven baker requesting taxi and take-off instructions."

Each man pressed his headphones a little tighter to catch the reply. "Four one seven baker from Tontuda, taxi to east end of strip. You are number one and clear to go."

The engines roared and slowly the plane moved along the taxiway to take her place at the end of the strip. She pulled onto the runway and gathered speed for take-off, then slowly rose into the air. The motors became faint and then there was silence again; that was the last time anyone ever heard of four one seven baker.

Weather reports for Nov. 13, 1943, tell of bad weather.

— ROBERT TAYLOR CLOUD

Rhet as Writ

"Consist"ency:

People who smoke cigars consist almost entirely of businessmen.

Most of the social smokers consist of women.

When I have my home I want a large living room consisting of a fireplace.

. . . .

Elmhurst is a city of sixteen thousand people lying fifteen miles west of Chicago.

. . . .

You pass through the revolving door and are met by one of the armed guards who hastily scans faces and official passes as streams of diplomats clutching briefcases and office girls greeting each other enter.

. . . .

After eating some it still tastes as good as the first piece which you had eaten, even to the last.

. . . .

Large automobile factories were turning out plains.

. . . .

When hit from flak and out of formation, the navigator is one of the most important members of the crew.

. . . .

This experience was truly a mild stone in my life.

. . . .

It wouldn't be much out of order to see a baggy sweater and a pair of blue-genes on your campus hero or glamor boy.

Honorable Mention

- Dorothy Anderson* — Place of Residence: Hospital Ward Fourteen
Ruth Boggs — The Sweet Life
Stanley Burt — Pancho Villa, Badman and Hero of Mexico
Robert James Bonner — Yes! I Can Swim
George Deane — Agglutination
Dorothy Jean Ehrhardt — What Our Farm Means to Me
Virgil D. Esworthy — A Constitutional Study of Illinois Under the Virginia Regime
William C. Flanagan — A Problem in Deciphering
Frank S. Foster, Jr. — My Father Taught Me — What?
Chester Guziel — The Shark
Robert Haebich — *Les Miserables*
Melvin E. Hartzler — Six Yards of Concrete
Mitsuru Hayashi — Sound in the Movies
Lloyd Kuntze — A Review of *Alone*
Kenneth L. Lindsay — Freedom Road
Frank Loeffler — Jazz
John Rubinelli — Sand in Their Shoes
Jay A. Wade — The Sad Sack
M. E. Wilson — My Dislike for Rhetoric

